

The supposed rationales for the bill continue to change. A few years ago, when majorities of Democrats were mistakenly convinced that foreigners had hacked voting machines and tampered with tallies in 2016, this was marketed as an election security bill. But it keeps morphing to suit new headlines. Lately, it has been called a racial justice bill. Some Senators say it is really a response to some recent State-level legislation, even though their bill predates those bills by multiple years.

A partisan power grab in search of a justification—that is what we have here. Voter turnout last November was the highest in decades. African-American turnout was twice as high in Mississippi as it was in Massachusetts. Democrats' hysterical attacks against the new election law in the State of Georgia have been dismantled even by typically left-leaning fact checkers.

There is no crisis. Our Democratic friends just want the power to rewire our democracy on a partisan basis. S. 1 would take the Federal Election Commission—the bipartisan panel that regulates elections and private citizens' speech—and make it a partisan body run by the Democrats.

It would let Washington Democrats act like a nationwide board of elections on steroids, neutering popular things like voter ID and forcing legalized ballot harvesting onto all 50 States. This bill would let bureaucrats snoop around more in free speech; attack citizens' privacy so dramatically that even the liberal ACLU is unhappy; and even send public funds—get this: public funds—directly to politicians.

Republicans put forward amendments to fix those things. If Democrats had wanted real, bipartisan solutions, Republicans were there, right at the table, and ready, but Democrats voted us down. They wouldn't even let us redirect any of that public money to the opioid crisis. They wanted that cash for their own campaigns.

This partisan power grab failed to advance out of committee for the same reason it must never ever become law as currently written. It will shatter public confidence in our democracy if the Democratic Party decides it can rig the rules.

ISRAEL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now on a different matter, yet again, air raid sirens have been sounding in Israel. Israeli civilians have been huddling in basements, shelters, and hospital stairwells. Hamas rocket attacks are lighting up the skies, hitting buildings, and terrorizing, injuring, and killing innocent people. Of course, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic jihad receive significant support from Iran.

Fortunately, a remarkable percentage of the incoming rockets have been intercepted in midair by Israel's Iron Dome system. Americans should take some pride of our own in defending our friends with these high-tech defenses,

which we have helped Israel bring online and have advanced our own joint missile defense efforts at the same time. Missile defense is expensive but vital. It is yet another reason I am concerned with this administration's intention to underfund defense.

Whatever complaints Palestinians have with Israel's Government, wanton violence against civilians is completely and totally inexcusable. This is barbaric terrorism, not a legitimate protest; nor is it legitimate for Israel's obsessive critics to suggest any equivalency whatsoever between these inexcusable attacks and Israel's measured and quite targeted response against terrorists.

Yesterday here in Washington, street protesters screamed—listen to this—“Israel is a terrorist state.” On the streets of Washington, they screamed: “Israel is a terrorist state.” Some Democratic Members of Congress echoed that rhetoric almost exactly.

Look, the State of Israel has every right of self-defense. Its national security leaders have continued to display restraint and invest so much in precision and avoiding civilian casualties. That has been the approach of the Israeli Government.

Israel must know that their friends and allies here in the United States stand with them as they seek to restore deterrence, that we support their right to peace and security, and that we will not relax our efforts to hold terrorists and terrorists' supporters to account.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now one final matter, Mr. President. This morning, I will be joining three other congressional leaders to meet with President Biden at the White House. There is certainly no shortage of important business to discuss.

The President campaigned on a promise that his agenda would unite a divided nation. And he inherited a favorable situation. Vaccines were flooding America. Science had proven schools can reopen. Job openings were beginning to pile up.

Republicans sought to continue the 2020 bipartisan streak on COVID relief, but our new President and our Democratic colleagues preferred a one-party approach. They used the end of the pandemic to pass what the President's own staff admitted—admitted—was “the most progressive bill in American history.” Not exactly shopping for consensus.

Republicans were upfront with our concerns. We said these old liberal ideas would slow rehiring, slow down the reopening, and stoke inflation. Of course, just a few minutes ago, the Bureau of Labor Statistics published the most dramatic monthly inflation report in more than a decade. Many of the things American families buy have grown more expensive at a dizzying pace. Last week's incredibly dis-

appointing jobs report showed what happens when Washington taxes working people to pay other people more to stay home.

I am going to discuss these and other concerns with the President today, but I also hope we can begin to come together on pressing issues that should actually unite us.

The last time Congress took comprehensive action on surface transportation infrastructure, 83 Senators signed on. By the way, that bill was produced by Senator Boxer, myself, and Senator INHOFE—a totally bipartisan effort across broad ideological lines. The last time we drilled down on water resources, the margin was 92 to 6. Infrastructure can and should be a bipartisan issue; the same for supporting working families; the same for supporting our national defense.

If the President can remember that he promised to govern for all Americans, not just the far left, if my Democratic friends can remember they have just a 50–50 Senate and a closely divided House—not exactly a sweeping mandate for a socialist agenda—there is much we can deliver together for the country.

I hope today marks the start of a new course correction from this White House and a more successful dialogue across party lines. That is what Americans need, and that is what they deserve.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION TO DISCHARGE—Continued

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the motion to discharge the Brooks-LaSure nomination.

The Senator from Texas is recognized.

MEDICAID

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, more than 4 million Texans, including half of the children in my State, depend on the stability of the State's Medicaid Program to provide healthcare for themselves and their families. Everything from emergency room visits to mental health care, Medicaid funding